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very qualities which the Indians appreciate in their leaders. He was valiant, cunning, and eloquent, and, being a great warrior, had provided his people with firearms which made the Tobas superior in war to all other Chaco tribes and dangerous enemies even to the whites.

The Eakachi, as is customary in the Chaco, hold their assemblies under a shady algaroba tree, generally at the time of the new moon. Besides watching the conduct of their chiefs, they have to deliberate questions of war and peace and to appoint an extraordinary chief when an attack against an enemy is planned. In addition, they act as judges or arbitrators in quarrels and fights between the men.

A social feature characteristic of all Chaco tribes is the relative matriarchy or »mother-right» prevailing among them. Descent is traced through the female, the child being supposed to belong to the mother's, and not to the father's, tribe or clan. Closely connected with this idea is the custom prevailing among most matriarchal peoples, that when a man marries, he stays with his wife's family, becoming a member of her clan. All these features are found among the Pilcomayo tribes, but particularly among the *Choroti* where »mother-right» has developed into real mother-rule. Thus in those parts of the Choroti country where they are neighbours with other tribes and intermarriage takes place, it is the rule that if the woman is of the Choroti tribe the children become members of that tribe, whereas, if a Choroti man marries a woman of another tribe, he himself and the children become members of that tribe. This was particularly noticeable in regard to the Ashluslay in the South with whom the Choroti frequently intermarry. Thus the »great chief» of the Choroti living near the fort Guachalla, the old Atamo, was on his father's side of Ashluslay descent, but his mother being a Choroti woman he had himself become a Choroti.

The »mother-right» of the Choroti is not carried to such an extreme that for instance the maternal uncle or some other relative on the mother's side is regarded as the guardian of the children. Among the Choroti both parents are the guardians of the child although, as in other matters, the mother has always more to say. Nor does it imply that parentage is wholly attributed to the mother. On the contrary, the custom of couvade, as it is observed by the Choroti, shows that this maternal people is well aware of the father's great rôle in the procreation of children. The »mother-right» of the Choroti and of other Chaco tribes is in fact only a secondary phenomenon, evidently dependent on the social conditions which have developed among the tribes in this country, and which in their turn

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ease, without suffering much pain. From the point of view of the savage it is of special importance that this should be so. As the *Choroti* explained the matter to me: if at the birth the woman is ill, this is due to her being possessed by an evil spirit and the demon, owing to the close connection between mother and child, will also take possession of the latter causing it to fall ill and die. Hence the weakness and sickness from which possibly she is suffering must be concealed and reasoned away. The Choroti have a stereotyped phrase to express this: *lasīhe īse lóuet = lahse ihe, eis lóuet*, that is: »when the child is born, the mother is well». As a matter of fact, a few hours after the delivery the Choroti woman is seen to move about doing some small tasks in the house, fetching water, preparing food, and so on. In short, she acts as if she were quite hearty, thus deceiving herself, her relatives, and the evil spirits. But the curious thing is that among the Choroti the *father* of the child, seemingly instead of the mother, lies in bed, looks weak, fasts, and is attended by the women, in short, behaves just as if he were the person who had given birth to the child and were suffering pains. The precaution which the woman shares with her husband, in addition to abstaining from hard work, is that she has to diet. Like him she avoids meat, limiting her diet to boiled and mashed maize, the leaves of certain trees and certain other vegetables.

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This is the custom generally known under the name of *la couvade* (»hatching») and which among the Choroti exists in its most typical form. The father remains lying in bed for five or six days, or *until the navel-wound of the child is perfectly healed*. The reason for this is quite obvious and was, besides, expressly pointed out to me by the Indians. The navel-wound may become a dangerous source of infection, and the new-born child is in its most delicate condition during the first days or until the navel-wound is healed.

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Before I give further explanations of the ideas underlying the couvade practices I shall say a few words about the birth customs of the Mataco and the Tobas. These tribes do not practice couvade in the proper sense of the word, but they have the same ideas about an intimate connection existing between the new-born child and both parents.

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What I have stated as to the birth customs of the Choroti also holds true of those of the *Mataco*, with the exception that the Mataco father does not actually lie in bed. He has nevertheless to take certain precautions, and the fact that he pretends to be in a delicate condition during the first critical days of his child's life is shown by the expression the Mataco use of him. He is said to have an *aíttah limpáh*, that is to say.